Beefing up Security at IAF bases

1697. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there was a militant attack on the air force base at Awantipora in Jammu and Kashmir which was foiled by the alert guards;

(b) whether IAF bases house costly aircrafts and equipments and require special new technology devises to ensure their security; and

(c) if so, what special steps have been taken by Government to beef up their safety?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. A number of special equipment are already available at a number of Air Force bases. Steps to further improve/augment the security cover have been initiated.

Establishment of Military Cantonment in Averi, H.P.

†1698. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the total area of land acquired for the establishment of a Military Cantonment at Averi in Kullu district of Himachal Pradesh;

(b) the details of the progress made in the direction of establishing the same after the completion of the acquisition work; and

(c) the reasons for the slow progress?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) 1259 Bighas and 16 Biswas of land has been acquired in Village Averi, District Kullu for the purpose of locating Army Units. The State Government is in the process of shifting out the 33 families who are still residing on the acquired land. Further action, in this regard, will be taken, once the families are shifted.

Suggestions made by CII National Committee on Defence

1699. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) whether it is a fact that with the security becoming a growing national concern, CII has urged the Centre to reduce dependence on import of strategic defence equipment;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that the CII National Committee on Defence has suggested that Government should immediately inform its overseas suppliers of equipment that it would look towards indigenous sources from now on; and

(c) what are the other suggestions made by the CII National Committee on Defence?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has been interacting with the Government on various defence procurement related policy matters including the participation of private industry in the manufacture of defence equipment. It has not specifically spoken of reducing dependence on import of strategic defence equipment but has stated that Industry be permitted to partake in the Government's objective to achieve 70% self-reliance in defence by 2005. The CII National Committee on Defence has not made any specific suggestion about the overseas suppliers being informed regarding procurement from indigenous sources only. It has, however, made certain suggestions regarding licensing mechanism and procedures for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) proposals, preference to local industry, permission for Joint Ventures/Technical tie-up, between Indian industry with foreign investor, level playing field *vis-a-vis* the public sector undertakings and the foreign equipment suppliers, involvement of private industry in the perspective plans for equipment procurement by Armed Forces, providing information to the industry about technological requirement of the Armed Forces and R and D support to private industry.

Indo-U.S. joint efforts on missile defence

1700. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and US are working together on missile defence;

(b) if so, whether in the recent press conference by the Under Secretary, Arms Control and International Security in the State Department has pointed out that US and India are exploring the possibilities of having a joint missile defence programme;